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H.M.A.S. SYDNEY  
at Sea.

2nd March, 1970.

1/16/3(II)

The Flag Officer Commanding,  
H.M. Australian Fleet.

HMAS SYDNEY - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - FEBRUARY, 1970

Sir,

1. I have to honour to report the proceedings of HMAS SYDNEY, under my command, for the month of February, 1970.
2. At the beginning of the month the ship was alongside at Princes Wharf, Hobart, nearing the end of a brief informal visit. 1400 visitors inspected the ship when it was open to the public on the afternoon of Sunday 1st.
3. SYDNEY cast off at 1030L Monday 2nd and proceeded for Jervis Bay. A slow passage speed and pleasant weather facilitated training exercises en-route. The ship anchored in A1 berth Jervis Bay at 1300K Wednesday 4th.
4. The prime purpose of anchoring in Jervis Bay was to exercise Cargo handling operations for the forthcoming turn-round at Vang Tau. With the assistance of helicopters from Nowra reasonably realistic conditions were simulated and the exercise proved beneficial. Attempts were made to lower and slip the LCM's but sea conditions, slight though they were, prevented this evolution being carried out safely.
5. On Thursday 5th parties of Cadet Midshipmen from the RAN College were shown round the ship. At 1830K SYDNEY weighed and proceeded, opening out 60 miles from the coast to pump bilges overnight and entering Port Jackson at 1040K Friday 6th.
6. The ship ammunitioned at No.3 buoy between 1130 and 1230K Friday 6th. Slipping at 1330 SYDNEY moved to Fitting Out Wharf, berthing starboard side to at 1406. Preparations were made to start loading operations on Monday 9th.
7. Over the weekend of 7th - 8th the ship was fumigated for the second time within a month.
8. Special security measures were enforced from 0800K Monday 9th. Loading and storing proceeded smoothly and no incidents occurred. Compared with earlier trooping voyages the amount of cargo embarked was small.
9. 36 of my Officers and Ship's Company undertook the Annual Range Course held at Long Bay Rifle Range on Tuesday 10th.

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10. Your Chief of Staff, Commodore N.E. McDONALD visited the ship on Wednesday 11th to be briefed by me and my heads of department and on Friday 13th, you, Sir, walked around the ship.
11. 7 Battalion RAR embarked on the morning of Monday 16th. You were present Sir, when, at 1100K, the ship cast off and proceeded for Vung Tau.
12. The voyage schedule necessitated a speed of advance of over 20 knots. During passage up the East Coast and through the Barrier Reef a southerly current of approximately one knot prevailed. With main engines performing creditably the high SOA was maintained; the ship cleared Torres Strait at 0130K Friday 20th and set course towards Darwin.
13. In ideal weather conditions HMAS ASSAIL made rendezvous with SYDNEY off Melville Island at 0830K Saturday 21st. Transfer of mail and personnel was effected quickly.
14. Passage across the Arafura Sea and along the south coast of Timor and Java was uneventful. Weather remained good, the soldiers underwent a vigorous training programme and all hands joined in the many sporting competitions arranged.
15. At 1530 HI Tuesday 24th HMAS YARRA joined company as escort south-west of Sunda Strait. Jackstay transfers were carried out between 1545 and 1650HI and the ships transitted Sunda and Gaspar Straits during the night. Passage across the Equator on Wednesday 25th was celebrated in the traditional manner by the Army.
16. At 0700H Thursday 26th SYDNEY and YARRA rendezvoused with RFA TIDESPRING northeast of the Anambas Islands in position 4° 00'N 106° 45'E. Fuelling was conducted on a northerly course to enable speed to be reduced for the last leg of the passage. 2074 tons were embarked; the operation was completed at 1056H.
17. Defence watches were closed up on the afternoon of Thursday 26th but all was quiet as the ship neared Vung Tau. YARRA was despatched to precede SYDNEY into harbour. After negotiating a way through hordes of small craft which frequent the harbour entrance at dawn, SYDNEY anchored in position 286 Point Garh Rai Light 8 cables at 0638H Friday 27th.
18. Despite an initial delay in bringing the barges alongside, the turn-round was the quickest yet achieved. By 1105H 7 Battalion and their equipment had disembarked, 5 Battalion and a large back-load of cargo including 111 trailers had been embarked, and the ship was ready to proceed as soon as the barges were clear.
19. At 1120H SYDNEY weighed and proceeded on the homeward passage. With YARRA in company, the ship made ground to the south at 20 knots overnight and defence watches fell out after cleaning the Marked Time areas.

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20. HMAS DUCHESS relieved HMAS YARRA as escort during the forenoon of Saturday 28th. After jackstay transfers in the afternoon SYDNEY and DUCHESS proceeded uneventfully south towards Gaspar Strait. At 2359H Saturday 28th SYDNEY was in position 01° 41'S 107° 14'E.

TRAINING

21. Branch Technical Training has progressed satisfactorily. BTT's for Supply, Engineering and Electrical branch trainees were completed during the month and those for Seaman trainees began on Monday 23rd.

22. Higher ranks training has continued with the emphasis on Squad drill. Classes have been held regularly.

23. Normal diving practice has been carried out and training in night and day half necklace searches was conducted before departure for Vung Tau. Approximately 20 hours diving time was involved in cleaning the ship's propellers during the period alongside in Sydney; 6 out of 8 propeller-boss locking screws were missing on the port shaft and replacements were fitted by ship's divers.

24. Circuit training for trainees was introduced for a trial period and is proving popular. Trainees have in general, shown a marked interest in this type of training and many continue it in their own time.

ENGINEERING AND ELECTRICAL

25. All machinery is running satisfactorily. Minor problems, lasting approximately 48 hours, developed with the forward Vacuum Refrigerator and Main Refrigeration machinery.

26. Main machinery has been operated continuously at high power during the voyage and 180-190 revolutions have been maintained for up to 96 hours. Other than around some soot-blowers there is little sign of boiler brickwork deterioration as was previously reported.

27. All major electrical machinery has functioned satisfactorily. Ventilation fan motors have required a large maintenance effort while in tropical areas.

MESSDECKS

28. The 66 bunks ordered for 3C1 and 3C3 messdecks were made available to the ship on Friday 13th February, 3 days before sailing. Through sheer hard work ship's staff completed fitting the bunks by Monday 16th; they were greatly assisted by advice and as-fitted drawings provided by G.O.S.I. The mess has been in use since Monday 16th and a number of small jobs will be completed after it is vacated.

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SUPPLY

29. Commander R.J.F. BROWN RAN assumed the duties of Supply Officer on Friday 13th.

HEALTH, CONDUCT AND MORALE

30. The health, conduct and morale of the ship's company are satisfactory. The morale of the officers is satisfactory.

31. It is unfortunate that no band has been embarked during the voyage.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,



(D.A.H. CLARKE)

CAPTAIN

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